

1.913
C3F 22
1131/40

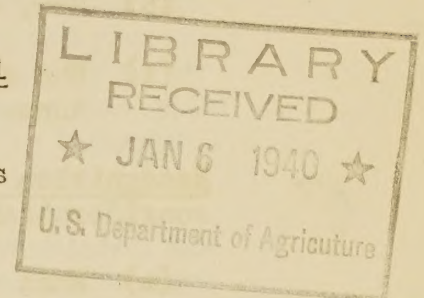
EXTENSION SERVICE

United States Department of Agriculture and State Agricultural Colleges
Cooperating

A Progress Report of How We Are Helping Farm Families
With Their Economic Problems

SOME STUMBLING-BLOCKS ENCOUNTERED /1

Clara E. Jonas
Extension Specialist, Family Economics
University of Wisconsin



To understand and evaluate adequately the stumbling-blocks that were encountered in compiling this report, one must have a clear picture of the "stumbler's" conception of the job to be done.

OUR JOB, in whatever capacity, is first to help or teach folks to do their own thinking. To do this, folks must have facts and information to evaluate. It is our job to supply facts and information or to direct people to sources of facts and information.

FAMILY ECONOMICS as a "stumbler" sees it in relation to a family, means:

1. Understanding as to what is a desirable living for a given family according to its own lights.
2. Exploration of the family's situation.
3. Recognition of real problems and needs as indicated by situation.
4. Ways to solve problems and take care of needs by best use of available resources, some of which may need to be developed.

Exploration of family situation involves this information:

- (a) Income available for family living.
- (b) How this income is produced.
- (c) How this income is used.
- (d) Why this income is used as it is used.
- (e) What other resources the family has.
These might include skills, tools, equipment, health, soil, time, etc.
- (f) How resources other than money are used.

/1 A paper presented at the 1940 Agricultural and Farm Family Living Outlook Conference, Washington, D. C., November 4, 1939.

- (g) The possibilities of developing or improving the use of available resources or obtaining some they don't now have (such as skills and abilities).
- (h) How, when, and where folks can learn to develop their resources.
- (i) Who can best help them to develop all resources or better use those they have.

Recognition of problems and needs and their solution will take into consideration-

- (a) What the situation reveals as needs and problems.
- (b) What the family can do alone to better its living (taking care of needs and solving problems).
- (c) What the family can do with others by participation in programs of study and action in-
 - (1) Community.
 - (2) County.
 - (3) State.
 - (4) Nation.

Good sound thinking will need to be done-

- (a) By the family itself.
- (b) By those agencies concerned with helping folks to learn and do (example - Extension Service).
- (c) By those workers who help families to plan community and county programs of study.

In this way farm folks can use to best advantage the services of all agencies.

If this is the job of family economics, then its success depends on-

1. Recognition of its scope and job by all extension workers in agriculture, home economics, etc.
2. Understanding, by the family-economics specialist, of all other subject matter with which the family deals, because economics and management of resources and things to be managed cannot be divorced. Farm and home cannot be separated. Therefore, farm and home management cannot be considered independently of each other.

SOME STUMBLING-BLOCKS which this conception of family economics encounters:

1. Precedents or established ways of doing things.

If families are effective in solving their problems, by participation in community, county, and other programs of study and action, they must take part in the planning of such programs to the extent that they collect facts on their own situation and use them as a basis for such plans. This may mean a different approach to program planning and the writing of a specialist's plans of work. Such plans of work would not then be written until county programs are planned. Such procedures are now going forward in Wisconsin wherein specialists have a definite part in county program planning.

2. Attitudes as stumbling-blocks:

- (a) Toward the word "economics."
- (b) Toward the place of home economics in agriculture.
- (c) Toward the place of family economics in all home-economics subject matter even in agriculture.
- (d) State barriers of "trade or acceptance of ideas" or results of research in other States.
- (e) Toward keeping accounts and values therein.
- (f) Toward family financial planning and values therein.
- (g) Discouragement of families due to depression years. They are saying - "What's the use"; not "What can we do for ourselves," but "What can you do for us?"
- (h) Conviction that price is the solution to problems.
- (i) Idea that money is all we need in order to have good living.
- (j) Fears-
 - (1) Of upsetting established routine.
 - (2) Of stepping over into another's field and subject matter.
- (k) Bewilderment of families due to economic conditions.
- (l) Differences of opinion of agencies on the same question before the same group.

3. Lack of information that folks have about themselves or that agencies working with them have about these folks:

- (a) Money income available for living of farm families in given areas of the State.
- (b) Does income vary from area to area?
- (c) How much and what kind of food is actually being produced at home for home consumption.
- (d) Whether home production of food saves money.
- (e) No concrete facts (which all workers accept) that nearly all foods can be produced in all parts of the State.
- (f) No knowledge as to how well fed farm folks are.
- (g) No research as to whether or not it pays to produce at home bread, canned food, if you buy food to can; to consider the use of freezer locker v. home canning; make soap; etc. Do we "know" or do we "think"?
- (h) Whether or not it pays the men of the family (in dollars and cents) to plant and tend the garden.
- (i) How folks can go about planning to produce food at home (information assembled in one publication usable by the family).
- (j) How much will a farm family need to spend for food it finds it cannot produce (useful in budgeting).
- (k) A simple way to figure the dollars and cents cost of installment buying.

"Facts" like these rather than "thinks" will help families to make their own decisions.

4. Lack of printed matter with which to supply folks with needed information to use in planning for good living:

- (a) Farm and home account book (which we now have).
- (b) Budgeting or financial planning procedures.
- (c) Printed matter on many subjects (for general distribution). This requires time for writing such material, and money to print it in large quantities.

5. Lack of machinery and funds:

- (a) Few home accounts being kept.
- (b) To collect and summarize needed information, surveys, etc.
- (c) Limited secretarial help.
- (d) Publicity about scope of family economics and its real place in the scheme of things.

6. Lack of time, coupled with demand to produce.

7. Limits of eyesight to find facts and bring them together from available sources, many of which are poorly mimeographed or of such small print (photostated) that eyesight may easily be damaged or strained.

Exploration of the field of family economics revealed many things:

- 1. Home economics to be most effective must have the respect of agriculture and other departments working with and for farm folks, as well as the respect of farm men.
- 2. No one can tell anyone else what or how to do the job. Each, after consulting with many others, must be free to make his own decision in the light of whatever may be his goal or idea of the job.
- 3. One needs much time to explore and experiment.
- 4. No "stumbling blocks" are impossible of leveling off.

